

Theoretical Discussion on Regional Integration: EU-ASEAN Perspective

Thanawat Pimoljinda

Abstract

In recent years, there is much literature concerned with the study of regional organizations which usually discuss the deepening regional integration and the impact this will have on member states. Practically, many regional organizations attempt to reorganize their organizational structure to be more legalistic, thereby mirroring the European Union (EU) as an underlying model in shaping effective regional integration. Nevertheless, this article argues that a region that consists mostly of developing or less developed countries is unlikely to develop closer regional integration or as legalistic as the EU. Especially in the case of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a wide range of different internal aspects—political, economic, and social circumstances—in each individual state make it difficult to render them sufficiently so as to constitute a union. With these arguments in view, the central emphasis in this article is to provide in depth theoretical discussion on the process of regional integration as well as its impact upon member states. The analysis will then concentrate on the comparison of developmental processes of regional integration of the EU and ASEAN.

Introduction

The formation of regional organizations is not new. Indeed, it took place worldwide under different circumstances and for different purposes. In the 1850-1890 period, formal regional cooperation was initially taking shape in Europe, the course of it being driven by industrialization. After the end of WWII, the establishing of numerous regional organizations received a lot of attention. Examples are the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the security organization established in 1949 or the economic organization of the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) established in 1951. Especially since the 1960s there has been an upsurge of interest in regionalism encouraged by the deepening of existing regional organizations.

In the Western hemisphere, prominent examples are the political integration exemplified by the formation of the European Union (EU) in 1992 and the economic consolidation of the North American Free Trade Area (NAFTA) in 1995. In the Eastern hemisphere, examples are the formation of regional security cooperation of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)

in 1967 and even the proliferation of regional economic arrangement in East Asia, such as ASEAN Plus Three (APT) ('Plus Three' refers to China, Japan and South Korea). As observed, substantive variables affecting the pattern of interstate cooperation and the direction of regional organization change in tandem with changes in international relations. The stability and security issues of the Cold War followed by the awareness of economic development thus led states to think of the ways in dealing with this change.

In view of all the variations in regional formation, as introduced above, there are copious amounts of substantive literature on regionalism providing both conceptual and analytical frameworks for diagnosing its nature. More importantly, in view of the key areas of this article, there have been various theoretical approaches with differences in perceptions and interpretation being developed in order to propose some distinctive key explanatory factors accounting for the achievement of regional integration. The first approach is developed by neo-functionalists. They primarily argue that successful economic cooperation in one area would permeate to other areas, and eventually be integrated as a whole. This implies the important roles of the market and economic actors in stimulating closer regional cooperation.

For the second approach, as developed by intergovernmentalists, they initially claim that regional integration cannot succeed unless states decide to promote it. The possibility of regional integration, implied in this statement, requires an active role for the states. However, the above two theories seem to encompass only the regional and national levels by excluding the international system that cover them. In this regard, there are some other international relations theories that emphasize intercalations between the international system and states such as realism and liberalism. In the realist perspective, regional stability and security is the key determinant for the establishment of regional organization, while liberals claim that increased economic interdependence is the prevalent factor, for instance.

With the above preliminary discussions in view, the central emphasis in this article is to provide in depth theoretical explanation and discussion on the developmental processes of regional integration, and to investigate the potential factors that make such regional integration possible, including any potential impacts upon individual member states. What followed from these issues are the questions of whether regional integration is consciously created and driven by deliberate political sanction, or whether regional integration arises out of world economics and private market actors. With these questions in view, the basic issues set in motion are that of the relationship both between *politic-led* and *economic-led* integration and between *formal* and *informal* integration. The

analysis will then concentrate on the comparison of developmental processes of regional integration of the EU and ASEAN.

Neo-Functionalist Approach to Regional Integration

In a general sense, neo-functionalism is rooted in the liberal tradition of international relations studies. This theory was initially developed by Ernst Haas in his work *The Uniting of Europe (1958)* and applied by Leon Lindberg in *The Political Dynamics of European Integration (1963)*. It is generally recognized as a theoretical approach to study regional integration. It starts from the realization of ‘the significance of interdependence’, not only between states, but also between areas of human activities. Its aims are to explore and explain the processes of regional integration, especially in the case of the European Community (EC).

According to Ernst Haas, regional integration flows from a *process of spillover or ramification* in which the integrating of an individual sector is constructed by aiming to achieve the process of integration in other sectors.¹ With this proposal, the interconnected nature of modern and capitalist economies meant that integration in one policy area would pervade other areas of the economy and spill over into connected areas. The liberalization of trade within the customs union, for example, would lead to the harmonization of general economic policies and eventually spillover into political areas. This could then pave the way for the creation of some kind of integrative political community, as Haas explains in the following fashion:

There are two types of spillover. The first type, ‘functional spillover’, occurs when cooperation in certain sectors of the economy or society creates technocratic pressure for cooperation in adjoining sectors, thereby propelling integration forward. Haas elaborates his chief finding that industrial sectors initially opposed to integration do change their attitudes and develop strong positive expectations if they feel that certain common problems can be more easily met by a federal authority. The second type, ‘political spillover’, occurs when ongoing cooperation in a certain area empowers supranational officials to act as informal political entrepreneurs in other areas. To manage complex technocratic issues more effectively, rational governments must delegate discretion to experts, judges and bureaucrats, thereby creating powerful new supranational actors with an interest in cooperation.²

With these circumstances, regional integration is a process whereby political actors in several distinct national settings are persuaded to shift their *loyalties, expectations, and political activities* toward a new center, whose institutions possess or demand jurisdiction over pre-existing states.³

The way political actors should be persuaded to shift their loyalty and expectation is by the positive effects of cooperation. As the process of integration proceeds, it is assumed that values will undergo change, that interests will be redefined in terms of regional rather than purely national orientation, and that the former set of separate national group values will gradually be superseded by a new and geographically larger set of beliefs. At this point, the force driving the process of integration is the interest-oriented behavior of political elites.

According to Leon Lindberg, the spillover is the process whereby a given action, related to a specific goal, creates a situation in which the original goal can be assured only by taking further actions, which in turn creates a further condition and a need for more action. The integration, in this regard, is a form of collective action among states to obtain a certain goal in which the ultimate goal may be political unification.⁴ Lindberg also construes the process of regional integration as an evolution over time of a collective decision-making system.⁵ This is because if the collective arena becomes the focus of certain kinds of decision-making activity, national actors will be in that measure constrained from independent action.

This is also implied through interpreting the process as a series of voluntary decisions in removing some barriers to the mutual exchange of goods, services, or even persons. However, when the collaboration among states is taking place under the conditions of great complexity, there is uncertainty about means-ends relationships in policy-making in areas such as the environment, energy, industrial policy, and technology transfer. With these in view, the process of gaining control over this complexity and interdependence among policy areas may expect the convergence of problem views and policy solution. And we could say that a given scientific idea or discovery or a network of specialists triggered the development of a political consensus, which in turn legitimated a new international program, we could make a definite observation about the impact of science on collective problem-solving.⁶

In this regard, *epistemic communities* characterized by a high level of technical and expert knowledge may play an important role in accelerating regional integration. This is because scientific cooperation tends to converge in and facilitate the formation of policy communities.⁷ The creation of an epistemic community would then lend support to the integration process. Regional integration, therefore, might be achieved in the *areas of low politics* which are at the same strategic economic sectors. Politics, therefore, is not a drag on regional integration, but is seen only as an essential ingredient. At this point, the permanent representatives defend national points of view, but at the same time are influenced by their participation in community affairs and often argue back to

their national capitals in favor of commission proposals, or in favor of making concessions to another member state in order to achieve agreement.⁸

Intergovernmentalist Critiques of Neo-Functionalism

Intergovernmentalism is one of the specific approaches designed to understand the EU from a basically realist perspective. This theory is significantly developed by Stanley Hoffmann and Andrew Moravcsik. Differing from neo-functionalism's spillover interpretation, intergovernmentalists agree basically on the 'main role of states in international politics'. This is because the action of states is driven significantly by *national interests* and particularly for reasons of protecting *national sovereignty*.⁹ As Stanley Hoffmann says, 'every international system owes its inner logic and its unfolding to the diversity of domestic determinants, geo-political situations, and outside aims among its units'.¹⁰ The game of regional integration, therefore, was complicated further by the domestic politics of the member states and their distinctive alignments in the international system.

Hoffmann also proposed a synthetic approach to explore and investigate the domestic priorities and foreign policy goals of the member states, then the impact of the environment and finally the institutional interplay between the states and the community. He contrasted the logic of integration with the logic of diversity. The latter sets limits to the degree to which the spillover process can operate. It restricts the domain in which the logic of functional integration operates in the area of welfare. At this point, he advances the suggestion that in the area of key importance to the national interest, 'nations prefer the certainty, or the self-controlled uncertainty, of national self-reliance, to the uncontrolled uncertainty of integration'.¹¹ In this regard, the latter areas are referred to as *high politics* in which, in turn, spillover was limited to the areas of *low politics*.¹² At this point, Hoffmann has drawn attention to the case of EU integration as seen in the following:

First, the EC does not represent a new base of sovereignty transcending the sovereignty of its member states. Second, nations and national interests remain the key agents in the integration process which undermines the concept of functional spillover. Third, the historical context of integration must be taken into account to understand the phenomenon being observed. At this point, European integration is seen to be only one aspect of global development, especially during the Cold War. Because each state has different historical experiences and national interests, integration can only occur to the very low levels between real states.¹³

For Andrew Moravcsik, liberal intergovernmentalism presupposes that the major EC decisions do not take place in anarchy, but proceed on the basis of having accepted previous agreements as a new status quo, with respect to which societal actors and governments calculate preferences and alternatives to agreement. This argument continues the tradition that integration is a means for member countries to obtain domestic policy preferences through regional negotiation.¹⁴

For example, in the eyes of EU member's governments concerned with staying in office, they could bring these negotiated items reflecting national interests to the arena of interstate bargaining at the regional level. This is because, in accordance with this argument, they see regional negotiation as a process that can extend the scope of government control in which the position of the government itself is paradoxically strengthened domestically. In this regard, Moravcsik indicates that:

Liberal intergovernmentalism divides the EC decision-making process into three stages: *foreign economic policy preference formation*, *interstate bargaining*, and *institutional delegation*. Each of which is explained by a different set of factors. First, national preferences are constrained by microeconomic interests, to be supplanted by geo-political and ideological motivations where economic preferences are diffuse, uncertain or weak. Second, interstate bargaining reflects the unilateral and coalitional alternatives to agreement, including offers to link issues and threats of exclusion exist. Such outcomes are decisively constrained by, but rarely reflect the views of, the most recalcitrant governments. The influence of supranational actors is marginal, limited to situations where they have strong domestic allies. Third, delegation of sovereignty occurs primarily where governments seek credible commitments under conditions of uncertainty, particularly where they seek to establish linkages and compromises among issues where non-compliance is tempting.¹⁵

In this context, Moravcsik claims that the sources of integration are perceptions of national interest towards which he adopts a traditionally pluralistic view. He also holds that subsequent products of integration stem from traditional approaches to intergovernmental bargaining, thus linking the liberal with the intergovernmental perspective.¹⁶ As illustrated above, the EC institutions have strengthened the power of member governments in two dimensions. First, they increase the efficiency of interstate bargaining by reducing transaction costs, and second, they strengthen the autonomy of national leaders vis-à-vis domestic groups by adding legitimacy and credibility to common policies.

In addition, the EU enlargement process and its likely consequences for the future are hardly mysterious when viewed from the perspective of national interests and state power.¹⁷ The leaders of

current EU members are promoting accession because they consider enlargement to be in their long-term economic and geopolitical interests. Most requirements have motivated the governments in Eastern Europe to implement reforms that improve the state and increase aggregate economic welfare. From this line of arguments, the logic of intergovernmentalism might be summarized as follows. First, it is fundamentally concerned about the role of the state in regional integration by claiming that it is the source and controllable factor over the process. Second, that process is fundamentally an evolutionary one and not a teleological one. Third, the process should not be viewed in terms of the idealistic claims of functionalists, but in the reality of the political scenarios being played out.

Critical Arguments regarding Integration Theory

As discussed above, both neo-functionalism and intergovernmentalism mainly represented only the relationship between two main actors in creating regional integration: between politics and economics, or between states and markets. However, there are more challenges, as proposed by those theories, encompassing other theoretical approaches in the study of regional integration. Some critical arguments are made by Ben Rosamond in his work *Theories of European Integration (2000)*. As Rosamond says, ‘international relations theory has been too readily written off by contemporary writers seeking to offer theoretical treatments of the EU, misreading and misinterpreting some very important theoretical developments’.¹⁸

The missing point of these theories is that the essential difference between neo-functionalist claims and those of more classically regime theories, the liberal intergovernmentalist, is not that the former explain dynamic change and the latter are static. It is that neo-functionalism explains dynamic change primarily through endogenous spillover, while liberal intergovernmentalism explains it as a response to exogenous pressures or intended consequences of previous agreements.¹⁹ However, the temptation to see the linkages between the various forms of regional integration came from the supposition that they were driven by similar forces. Those are the radically revised geopolitical security structures that followed the end of the Cold War and the growth of globalization.

Realist notion on regional integration

The development of integration theory is carefully traced from the inter-war visions of a united Europe to contemporary analyses of the EU as an established institutional entity.²⁰ The security community, in this regard, is an entity where the component governments either retain their

separate legal identities or form an institutional combination. It is thus widely argued that the shift of loyalties to a new supranational institution, as proposed by neo-functionalism, is challenging to traditional international relations theory. There is seen in this case the replacement of the power politics of the states by supranational consensus politics. In this regard, the positive functional spillover of neo-functionalism is critically opposed by state-centric notions and national self-interest proposed by intergovernmentalism, especially the national security and survival notions proposed by realism.

As Hans Morgenthau said, the realist notion reacts against the assumption that the present division of the world into states will be replaced by larger units of a quite different character, more in keeping with technical potentialities and moral requirements of the contemporary world.²¹ On the contrary, realism construes the international scene as being ruled, most of all, by nation-states as the key actors in international affairs. He also encapsulates the realist thought in the international relations theory that: First, politics is rooted in a permanent and unchanging human nature which is basically self-centered, self-regarding, and self-interested. Second, politics is an autonomous sphere of action which cannot be reduced to economics or reduced to morals. State leaders should act in accordance with the dictates of political wisdom. Third, self-interest is a basic fact of the human being and condition. All people have an interest at a minimum in their own security and survival.²²

With these arguments in view, politics is seen as the arena for the expression of those interests which are bound to come into conflict sooner or later. In this regard, international politics is an arena of conflicting state interests. But interests are not fixed: the world is in flux and interests change over time and over space. With this proposal, interstate relations under the rubric of regional integration are *built and controlled by national governments*, whereas the role of supranational, transnational or non-governmental actors is rather limited.²³ States act in an anarchic environment where they constitute the highest units of governance and no authority stands above them. Their actions based on rational calculation are derived from the evaluation of their position in the whole system.²⁴

In addition, according to Peter Smith, intergovernmental cooperation provides only a recognized framework for accommodation among states on issues relating to the mutual exchange of goods, services, capital, or persons.²⁵ It results from ad hoc bargaining between sovereign states, but does not necessarily occur within a framework of long-term expectations, convergent interests, and shared benefits.²⁶ Nevertheless, these notions are also debated mainly by liberalism in regard to the function of economic interdependence, as discussed in the following section.

Liberalist notion on regional integration

Moravcsik, as summarized by Rosamond, developed a model which is called a *two-level game* to explain the process of regional integration.²⁷ This consists of the domestic-national level and the international-interstate one. The national interests derive from interdependence between society and government, and not only from the strategic game between the state executives of international affairs. This depicts theory as liberal in contrast to the classical realist approach which sees the motives of state behavior in fixed preferences regarding its geopolitical position.

In liberal intergovernmentalism, domestic bargaining on national preferences is sensitive on economic issues.²⁸ When citizens saw the welfare improvements that resulted from efficient collaboration in international organizations, they would transfer their loyalty from the state to international organizations. In that ways, economic interdependence would lead to political integration and to peace.²⁹ Lending support to these notions is that of institutional liberalism. A high level of institutionalization significantly reduces the destabilizing effects of multipolar anarchy. Equally important is that institutions make up for the lack of trust, reduce member state's fear of each other, which in turn provide a forum for negotiation between states.

For example, the EU has a number of fora with extensive experience in negotiation and compromise.³⁰ The European states can use the EU mechanism to ensure that the other parties will respect commitments already made. Institutions thus help to create a climate in which expectations of stable peace would be developed.³¹ European integration, therefore, as a process of pooling the sovereignty whereby the states decides to make use of their sovereignty together without losing it. In addition, the states need the integration to carry out their political tasks, their effectiveness conditions for the legitimacy of nation-states. In this context, the EU strengthens the states, for example, giving the leader of the states better positions in response to the particularistic interests at the domestic level.

European Experiences on Regional Integration

As discussed above, we could see that there is not a specific international theory that is able to clarify explicitly the nature and evolution of regional integration. The reasons and the aims for the creation of regional cooperation are also varied depending on both national and regional political, economic, and social circumstances. In a general sense, the EU's political project was initially pursued in terms of economic cooperation, but has gradually developed as a political unification. On the contrary, ASEAN started as an organization fostering political and security cooperation, but has recently developed as an organization fostering regional economic cooperation.

However, even in the case of the EU, there seemed to be two major challenges to the project of integration theory.³² First, the expectation that the European experience would be replicated elsewhere seemed to have been scuppered. Ambitious analogous projects such as the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA) had stagnated and there seemed to be little momentum among elites to engage in regionalist enterprises. Second, in the European case, integration theories had largely underestimated the role of national governments and the pervasiveness of nationalist sentiment. Parallel to this is the relationship between the contradictory characteristic of the *union* and *nation*.

This is because the defining characteristic of the Union is the entangling of the national and the European, or the embedding of the national in the European. This has led to what they term a system of international governance, with the EU, as an arena of public policy, presenting a challenge to national political systems because they are confronted with the need to adapt to a normative and strategic environment that escapes total control.³³ Therefore, in order to analyze the interaction of those factors in the context of regional integration, we need to reiterate the early questions. Whether regional integration is created and driven by deliberate political sanction, or whether regional integration arises out of world economies and private market actors.

In a general sense, formal integration refers to *de jure*, the integration led by the formal authority of governmental actors through agreements or treaties, while the informal integration refers to *de facto*, a transnational regional economy that emerges in the context of networks of production and exchange among private market actors.³⁴ The key issue is the chicken and egg question of whether formal precedes informal integration or vice versa. These associate with an issue of terminology: the distinction between *regionalism* and *regionalization*. Basically, the former refers to state-led projects which are characterized by the emergence of intergovernmental dialogues and treaties. The latter refers to the processes of integration which come from the market, from private trade and investment flows, and from the policies and decisions of companies, rather than from the predetermined plans of national or local government. At this point, Bela Balassa holds that:

In classical accounts, economic integration was understood as a staged or teleological process. Thus the decision by a group of countries to create a free trade area could only be given purchase by a further agreement to set a common external tariff, thereby producing a *de facto* customs union. Efficiencies would be further generated by the formation of a genuine common market among member countries to ensure free movement of factors of production. Then the gains of the common market could be best achieved through further deepening of integration. Therefore, monetary

integration, the use of common currency, would be the next stage. This in turn would generate incentives for further integration, even totally economic integration.³⁵

In this regard, according to the definition of Rosamond, the 'economic integration of the EU might be thought of as the emergence of a de facto transnational European economy and political integration'. However, he raises further questions on this point. What is the nature of the relationship between the state-sanctioned processes of European economic governance on the one hand, and the appearance of the trans-border process of production and exchange on the other? And in what ways does one promote the other, and at what point does management of economic integration require political integration?³⁶

Although the EU is widely perceived the world's most extensive and intensive form of regionalism, it has undergone a profound change since its establishment. It can be said that the EU is the product of a long evolution. It started in the 1940's with the habits of cooperation fostered by the Marshall Plan, and which continued through the establishment of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1952. The origin of the Treaty of Rome in 1957 which aimed to create the European Economic Community (EEC) was followed by the Single European Act in 1986 which set in motion the quest to achieve a genuine single market. And the Treaty of European Union (Maastricht Treaty) in 1993 then aimed to create criteria and a timetable for the realization of monetary union.³⁷

While these goals were only partially achieved during the formative period of the EU, the legal ground rules for a common market were put in place to be built on at a later stage. The experience of European integration is, therefore, the existence of a robust legal order underpinning the various rules and regimes agreed upon within the EU.³⁸ At the beginning, European integration was characterized by a system of decision-making which combined an activist bureaucracy and system of law with the involvement and subsequent support of member state governments in the decision-making process. Additionally, it is widely argued that the enhanced policy responsibility has led to an expansion of policy networks and communities around the core of the Union institutions.³⁹

This is evident when the agreement approved by the Copenhagen European Council in June 1993, which is also known as the *Copenhagen Criteria*, that covers the political, economic, and institutional requirements of candidate states for accession. This agreement states that the associated countries of Central and Eastern Europe shall become members of the EU. Accession will take place as soon as an associated country is able to assume the obligations of membership by satisfying the economic and political condition required.⁴⁰ In this regard, economic regionalization

requires governments to sanction the relaxation of barriers to trade and investment, or more proactively, to facilitate the provision of incentives to investment and trade sponsorship.

The process of market integration has been underpinned by a law-driven regime which governments deem to be in their interest to support. This rule-based system of integration permeates most areas of policy making as a result.⁴¹ In this regard, the experiences of European integration are seen as the specific learning and adaptation that taken place as new institutions have tried to find their place in the larger political order, after they had been legally established.

Regional Cooperation of ASEAN

To investigate the character of ASEAN regional cooperation, some questions, as asked in the case of the EU, would also be asked in the case of ASEAN. Whether regional integration is consciously created and driven by deliberate political sanction, or whether regional integration arises out of world economies and private market actors. These questions aim to analyze the relationship between formal and informal organization, and between regionalism and regionalization in the case of ASEAN. For ASEAN, the integration and homogeneity effects are both statistically significant, but lack the same degree of simultaneous occurrence as discussed in the case of the EU. Although ASEAN began in 1967 with the signing of the ASEAN Declaration, it was not until 1976 that the members decided to create a uniquely ASEAN institution.⁴² Since the founding of ASEAN, its governing bodies were slow in extending their scope of cooperation, and never imposed a clear functional mechanism for its institution like those of the EU.

Significantly different from the Copenhagen Criteria, the ASEAN Declaration and other agreements and treaties are freely open to all states in the Southeast Asia region.⁴³ And even if the ASEAN Charter aims at making ASEAN to be a more legally-based regional organization,⁴⁴ the implicit nature of relations among the member nation-states is still enveloped by the principles of the ASEAN Way. According to Amitav Acharya, the informal and non-legalistic procedures are preferred by proponents of the ASEAN Way because they create a non-threatening atmosphere for exploring ways of problem-solving.⁴⁵ In a general sense, the ASEAN way is a method of interaction and a decision-making process which seek to reach corporate decisions through consultation and consensus building. More importantly, when common decision cannot be reached, they agree to go their separate ways. As ASEAN evolved, the organization developed formula that allowed it to adopt positions without unanimity.

Therefore, following the ASEAN Way, Asian participants in multilateral security consultations constantly emphasize the importance of the comfort level among them, arguing that

contentious issues should be dropped from an agenda rather than risk raising tension. As Donald Emmerson said, a pluralistic security community is simply defined as a group of sovereign states that share both an expectation of intramural security and a sense of intramural community.⁴⁶ By logical extension, an amalgamated security community is a group of no-longer sovereign states that share these same two conditions of security and community. By further extension, in security communities generally these same features would be shared by a group of more or less sovereign states. The more pluralistic the security community is, the more sovereign its members are. By the same token, the more amalgamated the arrangement, the less sovereign its components.

In this regard, the demand for multilateral institutions in the Asia-Pacific is fueled by three factors. First, there is a desire to build upon the payoff of economic liberalism and interdependence. It is believed that this would encourage security multilateralism since interdependent states presumably have a greater interest in reducing the danger of war among themselves. Second, multilateralism is conceived as a problem-solving exercise aimed at preventing and containing the risk of regional disorder posed by an array of historic and emerging disputes and rivalries. Third, multilateralism is seen as an insurance policy to cushion the region against the current flux in the global economic and security climate. In addition, the various regional organizations in Southeast Asia are much less formalized than that of the EU.

Rather, Asian regionalism is pluralistic. There is no single dominant organization, as seen from the case of ASEAN, ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), or Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC), that supplies continental regional integration in the manner of the EU in Europe. Besides ASEAN, an example is that of APEC's commitment to an open regionalism approach founded on a promise of unilateral liberalization of member state economies. The APEC's regional project was designed to facilitate wider global processes and could be read as a means of preventing the emergence of a specific East Asian regionalism.⁴⁷ They are more explicitly state-led and their chosen mode of integration is intergovernmental.

APEC has no more than a modest secretariat and operates through regular meetings of national officials and annual Summit Meetings of national leaders. It has no collective aspiration to build a binding body of international law. For its part, ASEAN has been described as a soft security organization whose primary function has been to build relations of trust among its component member states rather than to construct firm agreement. In short, while economic regionalism in the Asia-Pacific is generally considered to be market-driven and hence relatively unconstrained by state action, the fact is that the national interests and preferences remain a major determinant of the possibilities for economic cooperation within ASEAN, and even in APEC. For economic

cooperation to move ahead, a model will be required that is acceptable to all because it promises equal benefits. Therefore, a greater political will to sacrifice at least some national interest for the welfare of the whole is necessary.⁴⁸

Summary

On the basis of what has been discussed above, it can be said that there is no single theory able to explain the nature of regional integration, indeed, international cooperation as a whole. More importantly, the transition from the historical uncertainties of the Cold War to the modern period of economic globalization also influenced the pattern of relationships between regional organizations and member states and vice-versa. The challenges to theoretical assumptions and pragmatic considerations, therefore, are not more or less integration, but rather what to do with the political and economic structures that have already been created.

Nevertheless, the study of regional integration is helpful in understanding the determinant factors that make integration possible and the potential impact on member states. But it would be of no avail if we set in motion a distinctive form of what integration should be. Significantly, successful regional integrations should not be measured on how closely they are integrated. Instead, they should be measured on how effectively they are in dealing deal with cooperation. More importantly, as mentioned in regard to the experience of European regional integration, it evolved within a distinctive configuration which in turn has produced a distinctive model of internationalization of its own. It is for this reason that such a model should also be used to explain the distinctive model of ASEAN regional cooperation as well.

Like benchmarking, a comparative approach is mainly done to analyze the evolution of regional cooperation and integration rather than looking at the possibility or the way to accomplish the ultimate goal of cooperation. Importantly, there is not an explicitly explanatory factor to assert that the pattern of European regional integration is an advantageous style of regional integration when it is adopted by other regional organizations, especially in the case of ASEAN.

NOTES

· Thanawat Pimoljinda, Ph.D. in political science, the Institute of International Studies (IIS-RU), Ramkhamhaeng University, Bangkok, Thailand. Correspondence in connection with this article may be addressed to: pimoljinda_t@hotmail.com

¹ Ernst Haas, *The Uniting of Europe* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1958).

² *Ibid.*, p. xii.

³ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-16.

⁴ Political integration will be defined as a process. It is, firstly, the process whereby nations forgo the desire and ability to conduct foreign and domestic policies independently of each other, seeking instead to make joint decisions or to delegate the decision-making process to new central organs. Second, it is the process whereby political actors in several distinct settings are persuaded to shift their expectations and political activities to a new center. This is similar to what Haas (1958) mentions about regarding the shift of loyalty. See Leon Lindberg, *The Political Dynamic of European Integration* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1963).

⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 46.

⁶ See Ernst Haas, M. P. Williams, and D. Babai, *Scientists and World Order: The Uses of Technical Knowledge in International Organizations* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977), p. 9.

⁷ H. Farrell and A. Heritier, 'A Rationalist-Institutionalist Explanation of Endogenous Regional Integration', *Journal of European Public Policy* 12, (2005), pp. 273-290.

⁸ Lindberg, *The Political Dynamic of European Integration*, pp. 78-79.

⁹ Simon Hix, *The Political System of the European Union* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), p. 15.

¹⁰ Stanley Hoffmann, 'Obstinate or Obsolete? The Fate of the Nation-State and the Case of Western Europe', *Daedalus* 95, (1966), pp. 892-908.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 892.

¹² Andrew Moravcsik states that national interests emerge through domestic political conflict as social groups compete for political influence, national and transnational coalitions form and new policy alternatives are recognized by governments. An understanding of domestic politics is a precondition for, not a supplement to, the analysis of strategic interaction among states. Andrew Moravcsik, 'Preferences and Power in the EC: A Liberal Intergovernmentalist Approach', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 31, no. 4 (1993), p. 481.

¹³ Hoffmann, 'Obstinate or Obsolete?', p. 895.

¹⁴ Andrew Moravcsik, 'Liberal Intergovernmentalism and Integration: A Rejoinder', *Journal of Common Market Studies* 33, no. 4 (1995), pp. 612-616.

- ¹⁵ Moravcsik, 'Preferences and Power in the EC', pp. 481-501.
- ¹⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 481.
- ¹⁷ Andrew Moravcsik and M. A. Vachudova, 'National Interest, State Power, and EU Enlargement', *East European Politics and Societies* 17, no. 1 (2003), pp. 42-57.
- ¹⁸ Ben Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 2000).
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 68-73.
- ²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 14-16.
- ²¹ *Politics among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace*, ed. Hans Morgenthau (New York: Knopf, 1985).
- ²² *Ibid.*, pp. 4-17.
- ²³ N. Nugent, *The Government and Politics of the European Union* (Basingstoke: Macmillan Press, 1999), p. 509.
- ²⁴ Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979), p. 113; see also Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration*, pp. 131-132.
- ²⁵ *The Challenge of Integration: Europe and the America*, ed. Peter Smith (London: Transaction Publishers, 1993), pp. 4-5.
- ²⁶ Robert Jackson and Georg Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), pp. 85-89; Waltz, *Theory of International Politics*, p. 117.
- ²⁷ Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration*, p. 136.
- ²⁸ Hix, *The Political System of the European Union*, p. 15.
- ²⁹ Ernst Haas, 'Turbulent Fields and the Theory of Regional Integration', *International Organization* 30, no. 2 (1976), pp. 173-212; see also Jackson and Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations*, p. 115.
- ³⁰ Robert Keohane, *International Institutions and State Power: Essays in International Relations Theory* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1989); Joseph Nye, *Understanding International Conflict* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993).
- ³¹ Nye, *Understanding International Conflict*, p. 39; Jackson and Sorensen, *Introduction to International Relations*, pp. 114-122.
- ³² Shaun Breslin, Richard Higgott, and Ben Rosamond, 'Regions in Comparative Perspective', *Working Paper CSGR No. 107/02* (University of Warwick, 2002).
- ³³ See Brigid Laffan, Rory O'Donnell, and Michael Smith, *Europe's Experimental Union: Rethinking Integration* (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 74-87.

- ³⁴ *The Dynamic of European Integration*, ed. William Wallace (London: Pinter, 1990).
- ³⁵ Bela Balassa, *The Theory of Economic Integration* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1962), pp. 70-98.
- ³⁶ See also Rosamond, *Theories of European Integration*, p. 1.
- ³⁷ See *Strengthening ASEAN Integration: Lessons from the EU's Rule of Law*, eds. Apirat Petchsiri, Alfred E. Kellermann, Charit Tingbabadh, and Pornsan Watananguhn (Proceeding Conference of the Center for European Studies, Chulalongkorn University, Thailand, 2001), p. 25; see also Laffan, O'Donnell, and Smith, *Europe's Experimental Union*, p. 51.
- ³⁸ Petchsiri, Kellermann, Tingbabadh, and Watananguhn, *Strengthening ASEAN Integration*, pp. 31-48.
- ³⁹ Laffan, O'Donnell, and Smith, *Europe's Experimental Union*, p. 85.
- ⁴⁰ The clue between informal and formal integration was the intervention of the State. In the informal process the state remains largely outside the process, while the market and any other transaction foster integration. Under formal economic integration, the state and the government, sets the rules and intervene to create, control or prohibit patterns of economic and social flows among the member states. See also Wallace, *The Dynamic of European Integration*, pp. 1-24.
- ⁴¹ Breslin, Higgott, and Rosamond, 'Regions in Comparative Perspective'. P. 10.
- ⁴² The Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia prescribed in February 24, 1976 is seen as a code of conduct for all ASEAN's member states which focused mainly on the interaction among them, especially the ways of interstate cooperation. *ASEAN*, 'Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia', (February 24, 1976), available at www.aseansec.org/5047.htm, accessed 2009-08-15.
- ⁴³ Donald Emmerson, 'Security, Community, and Democracy in Southeast Asia: Analyzing ASEAN', *Japanese Journal of Political Science* 6, no. 2 (2005), pp. 165-185; see also M. C. Anthony, 'Regionalization of Peace in Asia: Experiences and Prospects of ASEAN, ARF and UN Partnership', *IDSS Working Paper Series* 42/2003.
- ⁴⁴ ASEAN, 'The ASEAN Charter', (November 20, 2007), available at www.aseansec.org/ASEAN-Charter.pdf, accessed 2009-02-10.
- ⁴⁵ Amitav Acharya, 'Multilateralism: Is there an Asia-Pacific Way?', *The National Bureau of Asian Research Analysis* 8, no. 2 (1997), pp. 5-18; Shaun Narine, 'State Sovereignty and Regional Institutionalism in the Asia-Pacific', *The Pacific Review*, no. 41 (2005), pp. 1-31.
- ⁴⁶ See Emmerson, 'Security, Community, and Democracy in Southeast Asia', p. 171.
- ⁴⁷ Breslin, Higgott, and Rosamond, 'Regions in Comparative Perspective'. p. 5.
- ⁴⁸ Acharya, 'Multilateralism', p. 16; see also Narine, 'State Sovereignty and Regional Institutionalism in the Asia-Pacific', pp. 12-14.

